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ABSTRACT

Taking the premise that curriculum design embraces the historical introduction of "order" into schooling, this paper considers theories of curriculum order since the 16th century. Calvinist social discipline brought a curriculum of schooling to be followed and to be completed as well. Peter Ramus, a 16th century professor, reshaped "methodus" to mean sequential topics achieving desired knowledge transmission, welcomed by Calvinist educators. Amos Comenius (1592-1670) elaborated natural order by rationalization of time, subject, and method--rendering schools "free from failure." Rene Descartes (1596-1650) represented order, including that of schools, spatially. By the 19th century's close, progressives discovered natural order not in knowledge but instead in children's psychobiology. Freud and Piaget matched developmental curricula to child behavior, producing teacher training and educational psychologists. The 20th century's malaise over separation of concept from execution resulted from "progressivism," comprehensive secondary schooling, and organized teacher power. Curriculum challenges reflect new debates about professionalism, which includes teacher self-development within curriculum development. The lost connection between design and natural order prompts theorists to create nontechnocratic models, but the history of "curriculum" presents a logically impossible barrier. Commentators claim that educators live in a postpositivist intellectual climate. The question is raised whether educators are therefore also entering a postprogressive, postcurriculum epoch. Two reference pages are included. (CJH)

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March 27, 1987

Curriculum Design: Historical Perspectives on the Art of the State

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Curriculum Design: Historical Perspectives on the Art of the State

Starting from the premise that curriculum design relates to the introduction of 'order' into schooling, the paper considers the different notions of curriculum order that have emerged since the sixteenth century. In all cases, the assumption has been that there is a *natural* order to which curriculum design should conform. In some cases this natural order relates to the nature of knowledge; but in other cases the natural order of the curriculum is 'read off' from the psychobiology of the child's developmental stages (cf. the developmental stages of Freud and Piaget).

The paper concludes that much of the malaise that currently afflicts curriculum theory can be attributed to the fact that the connection between curriculum design and a *natural* order of things is no longer universally accepted. Just as commentators are claiming that we live in a post-modernist, post-positivist age then, by the same token, we might also be considered to live in a post-curriculum epoch.

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> The subject method specialist must not only be a person who is thoroughly acquainted with his/her discipline, but he/she must also be one who has mastered the philosophical assumptions that underline the various approaches within his/her discipline.
>
> (S. Fox, 'Schwab's conception of the practical', 1985, p.66)

> In the long run, it may be that the most enduring value that can be derived from curriculum history is...the very distance it creates from the problems at hand. By making the familiar strange, curriculum history may serve to heighten our critical sensibilities and thereby help us reformulate our problems in fresh and constructive ways.
>
> (H.M. Kliebard & B.M. Franklin,'The course of the course of study: history of curriculum', 1983, p.153)

The invitation to contribute to this AERA symposium provides me with the opportunity to summarize some (as yet) unpublished work. The line of inquiry I wish to report goes back to a chance remark (c1978-9) from Herb Kliebard (University of Wisconsin) that the the records of Glasgow University (1633) provide the *Oxford English Dictionary* with its earliest use of the term 'curriculum'. I was already searching Glasgow University records for other pedagogic material (e.g. uses of the term 'classroom'), so it was relatively easy to extend my inquiries backwards by a further 150 years.

Paper prepared for a symposium on 'Other times, other places: historical, comparative, and future studies as sources of questions within curriculum research' held at the Annual Convention of the American Educational Research Association, Washington D.C., April, 1987.

How, I wondered, had 'curriculum' come into being? What, if anything, had it replaced? How did the seventeenth-century usage match up to the term's subsequent history? And how, if at all, would an examination of the earliest uses of curriculum help to inform my own curriculum practice? Nearly ten years later I am able to report that these inquiries have, indeed, been personally and profesionally useful. Overall, then, this paper should be read against the criteria outlined by Fox, Kliebard and Franklin.

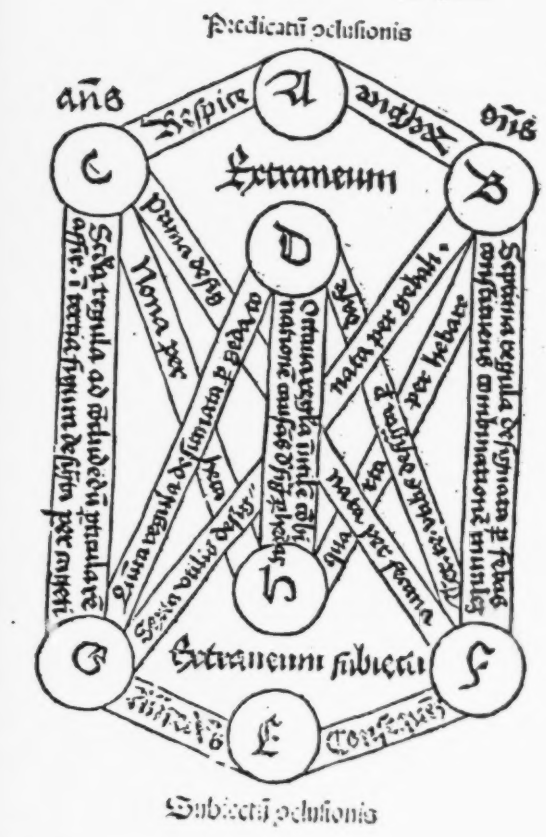
Curriculum and the Social Order

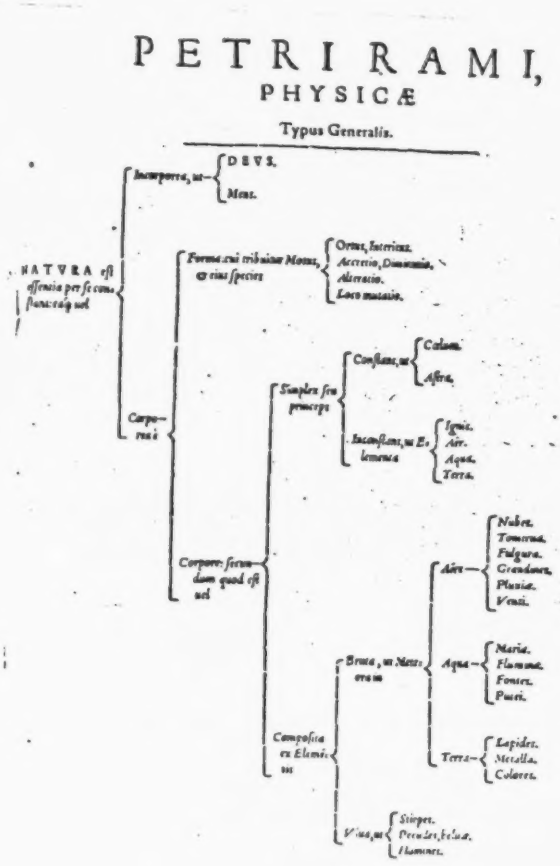
My first foray into the origins of the term curriculum was shared with Maria Gibbons. We presented our preliminary findings at the 1980 AERA Convention (Boston). If our conference paper had any originality it lay in the suggestion that the emergence of the term 'curriculum' coincided with the spread of Calvinist ideas about social discipline. The separation of 'curriculum' from the much older term 'vitae curriculum' brought, therefore, a new sense of 'order' into schooling. We believed that, unlike earlier terms (e.g. 'ratio' or 'disciplina'), curriculum denoted a double sense of order. It conveyed a sense of 'order as structure' (cf. the social *order*) as well as a sense of 'order as sequence' (cf. the *order* of events). Thus, in Calvinist eyes, a curriculum of schooling was not merely a course to be *followed*, it was also a course to be *completed*. In short, Maria and I came round to the view that the appearance of the term curriculum was as much a response to prescriptions about educational coherence as it was a response to proposals about pedagogic sequencing.

After 1980, Maria and I turned to other things; and, almost five years elapsed before I returned the same topic. In the intervening years, I had been prompted by Keith Hoskin (University of Warwick) to take a look at Walter Ong's book - *Ramus, Method and the Decay of Dialogue* (1958). Keith's suggestion was that my work on Calvin(ism) could be fruitfully merged with Ong's work on Ramism.

Briefly, Ong's book had three themes that were relevant to my investigations. First, it claimed that Peter Ramus (1515-1572) - a sixteenth-century Professor at the University of Paris - had been

instrumental (along with Sturm and Melancthon) in reshaping the term 'methodus' to mean a sequence of steps whereby some desired outcome could be achieved. Secondly, it showed how Ramus linked the methodization of practice to a restructuring of knowledge (see figs. 1 & 2).





Figs. 1 & 2 Exemplars of pre-Ramist and Ramist representations of the structure of knowledge take from Peter of Spain's *Summulae* (1505) and Fregius' edition of Ramus's *Professio Regia* (1576)

By this single manipulation, Ramus could both describe the structure of knowledge and prescribe a sequence of 'topics' appropriate to the transmission of knowledge. And finally, Ong's book noted how Ramist ideas were particularly well-received by Calvinist educators anxious

to increase the efficiency of schooling. Indeed, as late as 1987, I discovered the earliest use of currriculum known to myself in a 1576 representation of knowledge prepared by one of Ramus' protestant (?Calvinist) disciples, Thomas Fregius (see fig. 3).

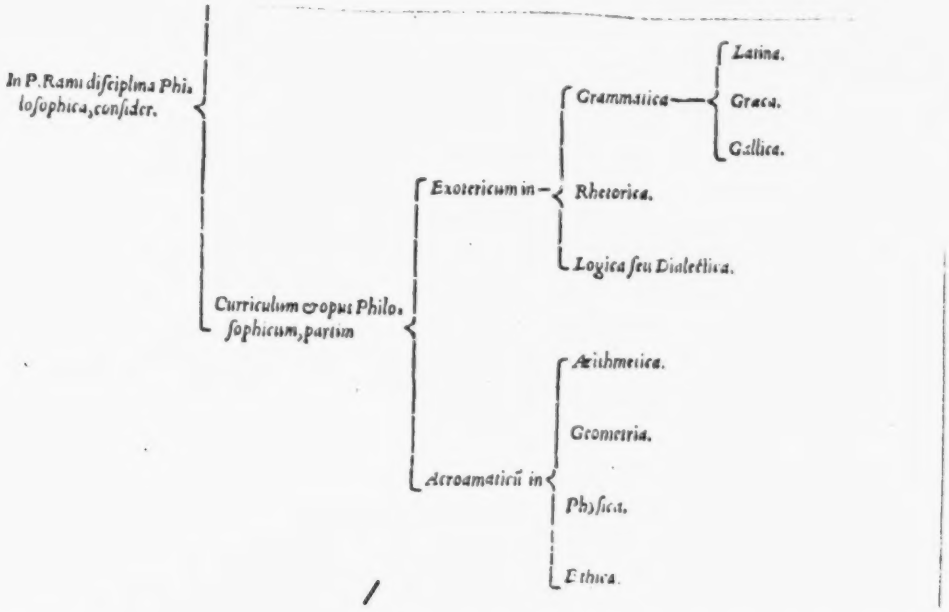


fig. 3 Earliest known use of curriculum as it appears in Fregius' edition of Ramus' *Professio Regia* (1576)

Curriculum and the Natural Order

By early 1985, then, I had rounded out the Ramist-Calvinist connection and, to my satisfaction, had 'explained' the appearance of the term 'curriculum' (see Hamilton, forthcoming). Once again I turned to other things. Later that year, however, I was asked to give one of the Kerr lectures at the University of Leicester School of Education. I took my title - **The Pedagogical Juggernaut** - from a phrase used by Ong to characterize the wave of educational reform mounted by Ramus' followers. The invitation gave me an opportunity to consider the post-sixteenth-century history of 'curriculum'. In particular, I was interested to see whether there was any connection between Ramus' curriculum ideas and the pedagogical theories of Jan Amos Comenius (1592-1670). Already, I had some circumstantial evidence to hand. Here, for example, is Comenius writing about method in 1632

(albeit in translation):

> For more than 100 years much complaint has been made of the unmethodological way in which schools are conducted, but it is only within the last thirty that any serious attempt has made to find a remedy for this state of things.

I had first come across this quotation - from Comenius' *The Great Didactic* as the epigraph in Charles Silberman's *Crisis in the Classroom* (1970, chapter 5). In turn, I had reproduced it as an epigraph in my own Ph.D. (1973). But it was not until 1985 that I was sensitized to the possibility of a Ramus-Comenius connection. Further reading (e.g. Webster, 1975; Oestreich, 1982; and Morgan, 1986) helped to support this hypothesis. At the same time, however, it also helped me to recognise an important disjunction between Ramus and Comenius. Ramus had felt that God's design for the ordering of knowledge could be extracted from the discourse of classical and renaissance thinkers (e.g. Cicero, Horace). Comenius, on the other hand, took a different stance. He felt that God's design was to be found, not in *books* but in *nature*. Thus, if Ramus was a child of the Renaissance, Comenius was a child of the Scientific Revolution. Moreover, Comenius elaborated the sense of order denoted in the writings of Ramus and Calvin. God's design was to be strenthened with notions like 'system' and 'organ-ization'. If nature could be induced to give up her truths then, so Comenius believed, the consequent rationalization of time, subject matter and method would render schools 'as free from friction' and 'as free from failure' as any other 'automatic machine' (p.248).

With Comenius, in fact, the pedagogical Juggernaut was only just beginning to get under way. My own impression is that it did not reach its cruising speed until the end of the seventeenth century. At that time it was given a new dynamism - a 'geometric' vision of social order promulgated by the followers of René Descartes (1596-1650). Insofar as Cartesians believed that 'order' could be represented spacially (see, for instance, fig.4), it was only a matter of time before schooling began to reflect this sense of order. In turn, Ramist efforts at the spacialization of knowledge were joined by comparable designs (e.g. timetables) for the spacial representation

of time (see fig.5) and for the layout of schoolrooms (see fig.6).

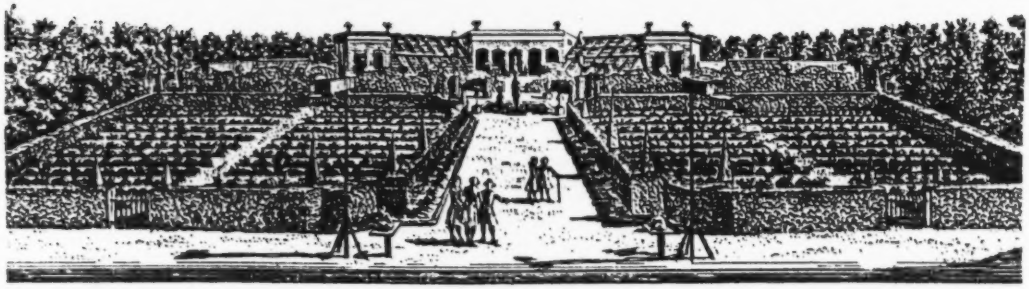


fig. 4: An example of the general cartesian influence on the social order - Linnaeus' early eighteenth-century garden in Uppsala, Sweden.

CATALOGUS LECTIONUM I. CLASSIS
IN SCHOLA XENODOCHIANA NORIMBERGENSI.

Diebus.					
Lunæ.	*Martis.*	*Mercurii.*	*Jovis.*	*Veneris*	*Saturni*
Horis Matutinis.					
Evangelium Dominicale Græcum. Psalmi syllabus Græcus. Epistola, vel aliud exercitium, domi componendum.	Grammatica Græca Rhenii, cum Authore Græco, A gapeto vel Epicteto, &c.	Augustana confessio, cum ejusdem epitome Hafnica. Examen Sauberti, dicta clasica ex Novo Testamento Græcè reddenda. Epistola vel exercitium die Lunæ propositum emendetur, & novum proponatur.	Logica Homel. Rhetorica Rhenii.	Græca Grammatica Rhenii, cum Authore Græco, &c.	Augustana Confessio, &c. Examen Sauberti. Scriptum die Mercurii propositum emendetur.
Horis pomeridianis.					
Epistolæ Ciceronis &c. Terentius, vel alius ex probatis Authoribus. Siedanus de IV. Monarchus. Materia versuum.	Prosodia. Buchananus, vel Horatius, Ovidius &c. Scriptum extemporaneum.	FERIÆ.	Grammatica Latina. Syntaxis. Erasmi copia verborum. Versus die Lunæ propositi emendentur.	Scriptum Græcum proponatur, & antecedaneum propositum emendetur. Logica Homel.	FERIÆ.

fig. 5: Seventeenth-century example of the cartesian influence upon the spacialisation of educational time (taken from Alt, 1960, p. 400)

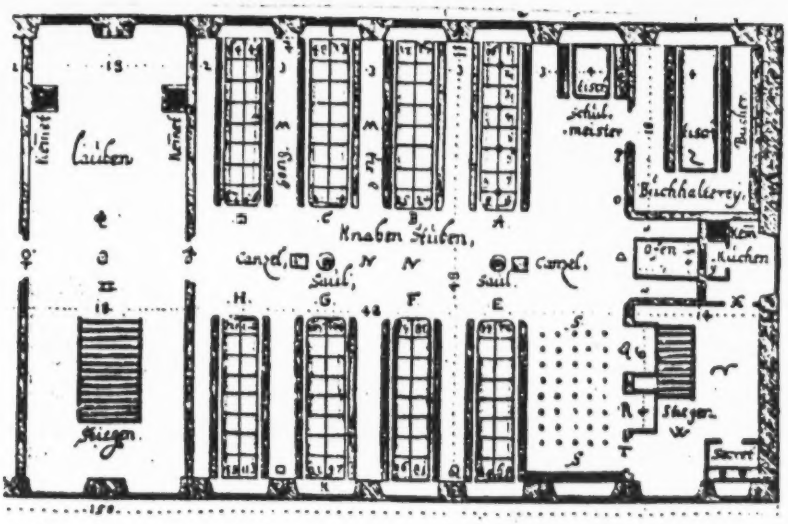


fig. 6: Seventeenth century example of cartesian organisation of educational space (from Alt, 1960, p. 343)

Curriculum and the Psychological Order

Here I would like to jump nearly 150 years - to the end of the nineteenth century and to a period of new thinking about the 'order of instruction'. Recently, Malcolm Skilbeck (1984, p. 24) has characterised this development as the 'progressive challenge' in curriculum theory. Most visibly, the movement stood opposed to the Ramist view that the structure of knowledge provided the only valid paradigm for curriculum design. Instead, the progressives argued that the *natural* order of the curriculum was not to be found in knowledge but, rather, in the biological/psychological makeup of the learner. In effect, the progressive challenge proposed a child-centred view of curriculum design; and, in turn, made it possible for a distinctions to emerge between the 'logic' and the 'pyschology' of the curriculum (see Henle, 1962).

But how, then, were curricula to be structured? To cut a long story short, concepts of child 'development' - by they Dewey's, Freud's or Piaget's - began to have an impact on curriculum design. Those teachers who took up the progressive challenge also took up new resonsibilities. Their pedagogical task was, in effect, to 'match' developmental (i.e. psychologically-graded) curricula to the behaviour

of individual children. Historically, this pedagogic problem had three consequences: it raised the status of the training of primary teachers; it gave authority to those educational psychologists (e.g. Cyril Burt and Susan Isaacs) who saw their task as guiding the pedagogic practice of progressive school teachers; and, not least, it gave support to the development of child-processing technologies (e.g. developmental scales) that teachers could use to monitor the progress of individual children.

For all these reasons, it is probably not too extravagant to regard the progressive challenge as an attempt to replace Ramist curriculum thinking with curriculum (or pedagogic) models bult around such notions as 'interest', 'growth' and 'development'. Yet, whatever the schoolroom impact of this challenge, it is certainly the case that knowledge-derived meanings of curriculum were cast into doubt (see Skilbeck, 1984, pp.24-25). Nonetheless, the concept of structure remained an important organizing principle within pedagogic practice.

Curriculum and the Professional Order

I'd now like to turn to even more recent changes in curriculum thinking. Still, however, it is useful to relate them to the Ramist/Comenian/Cartesian view of curriculum design. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it was clearly recognised that curriculum design (or curriculum planning) lay outside the schoolteacher's remit. To use a modern distinction, the 'conception' of a curriculum was something different from the 'execution' of a curriculum (cf. Lundgren 1983). Curriculum responsibility was retained by the church and/or state; while curriculum/methodological influence was exerted through the medium of social/educational blueprints (e.g. the *Ratio Studiorum* of the Jesuits (1599); the *Shorter Catechism* of the Church of Scotland (1697); the *Conduite des Ecoles Chrétiennes* of the Brothers of the Christian Schools (1720); and the various *Minutes, Codes* and *Suggestions* produced by the United Kingdom government from the 1830s).

During the twentieth century, however, the separation of conception from execution has become problematic, largely as a result (in Europe, at least) of the impact of 'progressivism', the spread of

comprehensive (i.e. non-selective) secondary schooling, and the rise of organised teacher power. In effect, a new curriculum challenge has been mounted, itself reflecting new debates about teacher authority, teacher accountability, teacher self-government and teacher professionalism (see Lundgren, forthcoming).

At its leading edge, this challenge identifies teachers as a new kind of educational professional. Their position and authority is to derive from (at least) three sources: their stewardship (not control) of the curriculum; their reflective and deliberative (not technocratic) stance towards the design of schoolroom practice; and, not least, their contractual relationships of accountability (not superiority) towards their clients, colleagues, employers, and others (see, for instance, Schwab, 1959; Stenhouse, 1975; Schön, 1983; Kemmis, 1986; Carr, 1987; Garver, 1987).

In an important respect, then, this approach to teacher professionalism is also an approach to curriculum design (cf. 'curriculum development is about teacher self-development', Stenhouse, 1980, p.255). As such, it lies within the terms of this paper. On the other hand, such a focus on teachers and/or a concern for professionalism tends to downplay curriculum questions, or to conflate them with questions about the planning, process or practice of teaching. Certainly, much of the discussion it attracts is remote from (if not alien to) curriculum designers of a Ramist or developmental persuasion. Debates about curriculum structure are not strongly evident, nor does the relationship between curriculum planning and state power receive much attention. Indeed, there is a very real sense - sometimes selfconsciously articulated (e.g. by Stenhouse, Kemmis and Carr) - that contemporary curriculum designers need to look outside the Ramist/developmental frame in order to create non-technocratic models of curriculum practice. But, given the history of the term 'curriculum', is this not a logical impossibility?

Lather

Already, certain commentators (e.g. Lather, 1986) are claiming that we live in a post-positivist intellectual climate. Are we, then, also entering a post-progressive (cf. post-modernist) and post-curriculum era?

* Available from W. Carr, School of Education, University College of Wales, Bangor, North Wales.

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